

REMARKS

Claims 23 and 42-44 have been amended to improve antecedent basis. No new matter has been added.

The Office Action mailed November 17, 2004, has been received and reviewed. Claims 1-44 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1-44 stand rejected. Applicants have amended claims 23 and 42-44 to clarify the present invention and enhance antecedent basis without narrowing the scope of the claims or surrender of equivalents and respectfully request reconsideration of the application as amended herein.

Preliminary Amendment

Applicants' undersigned attorney notes the filing of a Preliminary Amendment on April 12, 2004, which filing was not acknowledged in the outstanding Office Action. Should the Preliminary Amendment have failed for some reason to have been entered in the Office file, Applicants' undersigned attorney will be happy to have a true copy thereof hand-delivered to the Examiner.

Double Patenting Rejection Based on U.S. Patent No. 6,750,293

Claims 1-44 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-21 of United States Patent No. 6,750,293. In order to avoid further expenses and time delay, Applicants elect to expedite the prosecution of the present application by filing a terminal disclaimer to obviate the double patenting rejections in compliance with 37 CFR § 1.321 (b) and (c). Applicants' filing of the terminal disclaimer should not be construed as acquiescence to the Examiner's double patenting or obviousness-type double patenting rejections. Attached are the terminal disclaimer and accompanying fee.

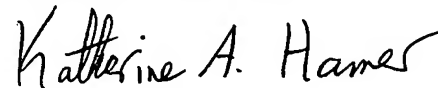
ENTRY OF AMENDMENTS

The amendments to claims 23 and 42-44 above should be entered by the Examiner because the amendments are supported by the as-filed specification and drawings and do not add new matter to the application.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-44 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early notice thereof is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner determine that additional issues remain which might be resolved by a telephone conference, he is respectfully invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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